

The Duty and Happiness of doing good.

---

T W O  
S E R M O N S :

The Former, Preached at the  
YORK-SHIRE FEAST,  
In *Bow-Church*, Feb. 17. 1679.

The Other, Before the  
Lord MAYOR  
AND  
ALDERMEN  
OF  
L O N D O N,

At the SPITTLE, Apr. 14. 1680.

---

By JOHN SHARPE, D. D. Rector of *St. Giles*  
in the Fields, and Chaplain to the Right Honour-  
able the Lord High Chancellour of *England*.

---

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Walter Kestilby*, at the Bishop's-Head  
in *St. Paul's Church-yard*; 1680.

---

THE OFFICE OF THE

TWO  
SERMONS

THE FORMER PREACHED IN THE  
YORKSHIRE CHURCH  
IN BRISTOL

THE OTHER, IN THE  
LORD MAYOR

AND  
ALDERMAN  
OF  
LONDON

AND SERMONS  
BY THE  
REV. JOHN H. ...  
IN THE ...  
AND THE ...

LONDON  
PRINTED BY ...  
IN THE ...

A  
S E R M O N

Preached at the Second

GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

GENTLEMEN, and others in  
and near LONDON,

Who were Born within the

COUNTY of YORK.

In the Church of St. *Mary-le-Bow*,

*February 17. 1672.*

---

By *JOHN SHARPE*, D. D. Rector of *St. Giles*  
in the Fields, and Chaplain to the Right Honour-  
able the Lord High Chancellour of *England*.

---

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Walter Kettilby* at the *Bishop's-Head*,  
in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*. 1680.

SE R M O N



To my Honour'd  
FRIENDS and COUNTRY-MEN,

Mr.	{	William Petyt	{	Mr.	{	John Short
		Richard Graham				Francis Boynton
		John Cooke				Peter Short
		Mich. Wrightson				Gab. Wettenhall
		Tob. Humphrys				Arthur Sedgwick
		Anth. Lawson				Thomas Watton

Stewards of the last York-shire Feast.

GENTLEMEN,

**I** Now at length Present you with that Sermon which at your desire I Preached at the Second Anniversary Meeting of our Countrey-men, and which you were pleas'd so far to Approve as to Request the Publication of it. That I have not performed your Request so soon as might be expected, I hope you will pardon me, since I had not till this time a convenient leisure to Transcribe

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

*my Papers for the Press. If this plain Discourse, now that it is publick, do any way conduce to promote Doing Good which is the Argument of it, I shall thank God for the Success, and You for putting me upon the Attempt.*

Gentlemen, I am

Your Affectionate Countrey-man,

Friend and Servant,

JOHN SHARPE.

# S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D

At the Second general Meeting of the  
Gentlemen and others in and near  
*London*, who were Born within the  
County of *York*.

E C C L E S. iii. 10.

*I know that there is no good in them, but for a  
man to rejoyce and to do good in his life.*

**T**His Book of *Ecclesiastes* gives us an account  
of the several Experiments that *Solomon*  
had made in order to the finding out  
wherein the Happiness of Man in this World doth  
consist; and these Words are one of the conclu-  
sions he drew from those Experiments.

No man had ever greater Opportunities of Try-  
ing all the ways wherein men generally seek for

Con-

## *A Sermon preached*

Contentment than he had ; and no man did ever more industriously apply himself to, or took a greater liberty in enjoying those good things that are commonly most admired than he did : And yet after all his Labor and all his Enjoyments he found nothing but Emptiness and Dissatisfaction.

*Eccles. 1. 13.* He thought to become Happy by Philosophy, giving his heart, as he tells us, to seek and search out all the things that come to pass under the Sun : Yet upon Tryal, he found all this to be Vanity and vexation of Spirit.

*ver. 18.* He applied his mind to Political Wisdom and other sorts of Knowledge, and his Attainments in that kind were greater than of any that were before him ; yet he experienced at last that in Wisdom was much grief, and he that increaseth Knowledge increaseth Sorrow.

*Cap. 2. ver. 1. 3.* He proved his heart ( as he tells us ) with Mirth and Wine and all sorts of Sensual Pleasures to find if these were good for the Sons of men : and yet so far was he from his desired satisfaction in these things, that he was forced to say of Laughter that it was mad, and of Mirth what good doth it.

*ver. 4.* He turned himself to works of Pomp and Magnificence, he built him stately Houses, and made him Gardens, and Vineyards, and Orchards, and Fountains. He increased his Possessions, and gathered

ed Silver and Gold and the precious Treasures of Kings and ver. 8.  
of the Provinces. He got him a vast Retinue, and  
kept the most splendid Court that ever any Prince  
of that Countrey did: yet (as he tells us) when  
he came to look upon all the works that his hands had ver. 11.  
wrought, and on the labour that he had laboured to do, behold  
all was vanity and vexation of Spirit, and there was no pro-  
fit under the Sun.

But wherein then is there any Profit if not in  
these things? What is that good that the sons of  
men are to apply themselves to in order to their  
living as comfortably as the state of things here  
will allow? This question (after an intimation  
of the uncertainty and perplexedness of all humane  
events, but withal of the exactness of the Provi-  
dence of God *who hath made every thing beautiful in  
its season,* He thus resolves in the words of the  
Text, *I know* (saith he) *that there is no good in them but  
for a man to rejoyce and do good in his life,* that is to say,

I have found by long experience that all the  
Happiness that is to be had in the good things of  
this life doth arise from these two things, *Rejoycing*  
in the enjoyment of them, and *doing Good* to others  
with them while we live. Take away these two  
uses and there is no good in them.

Or if you please we may Interpret the first part  
of his Proposition not of *things* but of *men* thus: *I*  
*I know there is no good in them, i. e. I am convinced that*

B

there

# A Sermon preached

there is nothing so good for the sons of men; or, nothing that more contributes to their happiness in this world, than that every man should rejoice and do good in his life. And to this purpose the words are rendered by several Interpreters, but it is no matter which of the senses we pitch upon, since in effect they come both to one thing.

Two things then, Solomon here recommends to every one that would live comfortably in this world; *Rejoycing and doing Good*: and I do not know what can be more proper and seasonable to be recommended and insisted on to you at this time and on this occasion, than these two things; for the putting *them* in practice makes up the whole design of this Meeting.

We are here so many Brethren met together to *Rejoyce* and to *do Good*. To *Rejoyce* together in the sense and acknowledgment of Gods mercies and Blessings to us, and in the enjoyment of Society one with another: And to *do Good* not only by encreasing our Friendship and Mutual Correspondence, but by joynning together in a cheerful Contribution to those our Country-men that need our Charity. To entertain you therefore upon these Two Points seems to be my Proper Business.

But in treating of them I shall make bold to invert the order in which they are put in the Text, and shall first speak of *doing Good* though it be last named,

at the York-shire Feast.

named, and shall afterwards treat of *Rejoycing*. The truth is, *doing good* in the order of nature goes before *Rejoycing*, for it is the Foundation of it. There can be no true joy in the Possession or use of any worldly blessings, unless we can satisfie our selves we have done some good with them. It is the *doing good* that sanctifies our other enjoyments and makes them matter of *Rejoycing*.

Now in treating of this Argument I shall briefly endeavour these Three things.

First, I shall earnestly recommend to you the Practice of *doing good* upon several Considerations.

Secondly, I shall represent the Practicableness of it, by shewing the several ways which every person (though in the meanest Circumstances) is capable of *doing good*.

Thirdly, I shall make two or three Inferences by way of Application.

I begin with the First thing, seriously to recommend the practice of *doing good*.

But where shall I begin to speak, either of the Obligations that lye upon us, or of the Benefits and Advantages that do accrue to us by *doing good* in our lives? or having begun, where shall I make an end? the subject is so copious that the study of a whole life cannot exhaust it. The more we consider it, still the more and the weightier Arguments will



## *A Sermon preached*

present themselves to us to ingage us in the practice of it: and the more we practise it, still the more shall we *desire* so to do, and the more happy and Blessed shall we find our selves to be.

For, to *do good* is nothing else but to act according to the frame and make of our Beings. It is to gratifie those Inclinations and Appetites that are most strongly rooted in our Natures; such as Love and Natural Affection, Pity and Compassion, a Desire of Friends and a Propensity to knot our selves into Companies and Societies: what are all these but so many *stimuli*, so many powerful incitements of nature to put us upon doing good offices one to another?

To *do good* is the end of all those Acquisitions, of all those Talents, of all those Favours and Advantages that God has blest us with, it is the proper use we are to put them to. If we do not employ them this way, we are so far from being *better* for them that we are much *worse*. What will signifie our Wit and good Humour, our Strength of Reason and Memory, our Wisdom and Knowledge, our Skill in Arts, and Dexterity in managing Business, our Wealth and Greatness, our Reputation and Interest in the world, I say what will all these signifie if they do not render us more Useful and Beneficial to others? That which sets the price and value upon every worldly blessing, is the Opportunity it affords us of *doing good*.

[To



To *do good* seems to be the foundation of all the Laws of Nature, the supreme Universal Law; it is that by which the World is supported, and take that away, all would presently fall into confusion, And perhaps if it were particularly examin'd, it would be found that all the other Natural Laws may be reduced to this and are ultimately to be resolv'd into it. It is a question whether there be any natural Standard whereby we can measure the Virtue or the Viciousness of any Action, but the Influence that it hath to promote or hinder the *doing of good*. This is that that seems to stamp Virtue and Vice.

To *do good* is the great Work for the sake of which we were sent into the world, and no man lives farther to any purpose than as he is an Instrument of doing good. Be our lives otherwise never so busie and full of action, yet if others receive no benefit by them, we cannot give our selves any tolerable account of our time, we have in effect liv'd idly and done nothing.

To *do good* is that which of all other services is most acceptable to God, it is that which he hath laid the greatest stress upon in the Scripture, it is that which he hath with the most earnest and affectionate perswasives, with the strongest Arguments, with the greatest promises and with the most dreadful threatnings enforc'd upon us. It is that

that which he hath chosen before all Sacrifices and all Religious worship strictly so called to be serv'd with. It is that which he hath appointed for the great Expression both of our Thankfulness for his Benefits, and of our Love and Devotion to him. Lastly it that which *Moses* and the Prophets make the Sum of the Old Law, and Christ and his Apostles the Sum of the New.

And very great Reason there is for it; for to *do good* is to become most like to God. It is that which of all other Qualities gives us the greatest resemblance of his Nature and Perfections, for perfect Love and Goodness is the very Nature of God, and the Root of all his other Attributes; and there was never any Action done, any work wrought by him throughout the vast Tracts of infinite space, from the Beginning of time to this Moment, but was an Expression of his Love, and an instance of *doing good*, (nay I doubt not to say, the most severe acts of his Justice and Vengeance have all been such) And therefore with great reason hath our blessed Lord told us, that the way to become the Children of our Heavenly Father is to do good to all, with the same Freedom and Unreservedness that God makes his Sun to shine upon the World.

And of this our Blessed Saviour himself was the most illustrious Example that ever appeared in the world, so that to *do good* is that which doth most

1 Job. 4. 8.

Mat. 5.  
44. 45.

most truly and perfectly render us the Disciples and Followers of Jesus, makes us really be what we pretend we are. His whole life ( as the Gospel tells us ) was but a continual going about doing good. The great Design of his Coming from Heaven, and of all that he spoke, and of all that he did, and of all that he suffer'd upon Earth, was the benefiting of others. And he hath left it as the great distinguishing Badge and Character, whereby his Disciples should be known from other men, that they should *love one another even as he had lov'd them*, Joh. 13. 34. 35. that is ( as his Apostle expounds him ) they should love and do good to that degree as *to lay down* 1 Joh. 3. 16. *their lives for the brethren.*

But to *do good* is not only our greatest Duty but our greatest Interest and Advantage, which is that that *Solomon* chiefly refers to in the Text. It is certain that no man can take a more Effectual way to render his Being in the world Happy and Comfortable to him ( according to the ordinary course and event of things ) in what Condition or Circumstances soever he is placed, than to do all the good he can in his life; so that though a man that lays out himself in this way, seems only to respect the good of other people, yet in true reckoning he most consults his own profit.

For to *do good* in the natural way to raise us friends, who shall be oblig'd to contribute their  
En-

Endeavours to the furthering our honest designs; to the upholding and securing us in our Prosperity, and to the succouring and relieving us when we are in any evil Circumstances, such is the Contrivance and the Constitution of this World, that no man can subsist of himself, but stands in continual need of others both for their comfortable Society and their necessary Assistance in his Affairs. Now of all men living the Good man who maketh it his Business to oblige all about him, is most likely to be the best befriended.

To *do good* is the truest way to procure to a mans self a Good name and Reputation in the World, which as it is a thing desirable upon many accounts, so it is a singular Advantage to a man for the carrying on his secular designs. Nay to *do good* is to Embalm a mans name and to transmit it with a grateful Odour to posterity. *The memory of a good man shall be blessed.* And the sence of mankind has always been, that too much honour could not be given to the name of those that have done good in their generation.

*Prov. 10.7*

But which is a great deal more than all this, to *do good* is the most certain effectual means to procure the blessing of God upon our endeavours, and to entitle our selves to his more especial care and providence and Protection: So that let what will come; in all circumstances and conditions  
the

the good man has the greatest assurance that all things shall at least be tolerably well with him; and that he shall never be miserable. *Trust in the Lord* (saith David) *and be doing good, so shalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* *Psal. 37. ver. 3.*

Nay further, to *do good* is to entail a blessing upon our Children after us. *I have been young and now am old* (saith the same Psalmist) *yet saw I never the Righteous* (that is the merciful and good man, for that is the Notion of the word in that place and in most others) *such an one saw I never forsaken nor his seed begging their bread.* *Ibid. v. 24.*

Lastly to conclude this point, To *do good* (besides all these advantages that attend it) is most to consult our own peace, and to make the best provision possible for our pleasure and delight. Charity (as Dr. Hammond used to say) is really a piece of Sensuality. And Epicurus himself the great Master of Voluptuousness would confess that it was not only more Brave but more Pleasant to do kindneses than to receive them. And certainly every good man will find it so, for as the exercise of Charity and Beneficence is as truly a gratification of our Natural Inclinations and Appetites as any other action or thing that causeth pleasure to us: So is it also a gratification of those Appetites which are the highest and the noblest

we have. Now by how much the appetite that is gratified is more noble and divine; by so much must the delight that ariseth from that gratification be more exquisite. So that it was no very great Hyperbole of our Divine Poet when he said that

— All joys go lest )  
Than that one joy of doing kindnesse,

And which is further to be considered; it is not with this pleasure as it is with most others that vanish with the enjoyment, nay often leave bitterness and melancholy upon the mind after they are gone off. For to do good is a permanent pleasure, a pleasure that will last as long as our lives. The memory of our good actions will always be accompanied with Delight and Satisfaction; when all our other past Enjoyments prove matters of anguish and torment to us upon our reflections on them, these will be a refreshment; and the nearer we approach to death, still the more comfort we shall find in them. Would we therefore treasure up to our selves a stock of lasting peace and joy to support us in all conditions of our life and so make our passage easie at our death, let us do all the good we can.

I think I have said enough to convince any one of the truth of *Solomons* Proposition that *there is nothing better for a man, nothing that more concerns him either in point of duty or happiness than to do good in his life.* Much more might be said, and what hath been said might have been said with more advantage; and greater evidence if it had been fit to insist upon every particular: but I will pursue this argument no further, but proceed to the second general point I propos'd, which is to set before you the practicableness of this great duty, by shewing the several wayes which every person though in the meanest Circumstances is capable of doing good.

A great many there are that are as strongly convinced as may be that 'tis both their Interest and duty to be doing good in their lives, but they complain that it is not in their power, they have not any Means or Opportunities for it, and they bemoan themselves sadly upon this account, as thinking their lives useles because they have not those visible Capacities of being serviceable to the world that others have.

To such as these let me say this in the general: There is no condition in the world so mean and despicable, but yields us Opportunities of doing good. There is neither Old nor Young, Man nor



Woman, Rich nor Poor, High nor Low, Learned nor Unlearned, but in their Sphere, by a good husbandry of those Talents that God has intrusted to their care and management they may be very useful to others, and prove instruments of much good to their generations.

This truth St. Paul most elegantly sets forth in 1 Cor. 12. where he compares the Society of Christians to a Natural body. There he shews that as in the Natural body there are many members, and all those members have not the same dignity and honour, nor the same use or office: and yet every member (even the meanest) hath its particular use by which it doth real service to the body; nay so useful it is that the body cannot be without it: so it is with the Church of Christ and with every body politick. There is a necessity both in the Church and in the State, that there should be variety of functions and callings, and degrees, and conditions. There must be some to govern and some to be governed; there must be some more conspicuous, some more obscure; some whose gifts and endowments lay this way, and some whose Talents lay in another way; and yet there is not one of these but in his degree and station, either is or may be as useful as any that belong to the Society. *So that the eye cannot say to the hand (as our Apostle there expresseth it) I have no need*



*need of thee.* Nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you, nay more, *those members of the body* (as he continues) *that seem to be most feeble are yet very necessary.*

To reduce the Apostles notion to its particulars, or to shew in how many respects every individual person that is a Member of a Society is necessary to the publick, and either doth or may serve the Weal of it, and so do good in his life, is a task too great for me to undertake at this time, let it suffice at the present to propose to you these general heads.

First of all none can want opportunities of doing good that is in a capacity of performing any acts of mercy or charity strictly so called whether that charity be shew'd to the bodies or souls of men. Now the instances and expressions of this way of doing good are infinite, as infinite as are the wants and necessities of mankind.

To the bodies of men we do good when ever we contribute to the relieving and easing them of the outward pressures and wants, and necessities they lie under: Such as Sicknes, Pain, Poverty, Hunger, Nakedness, Debts, Imprisonment, or any other outward affliction that falls upon them; whether that ease and relief be effected by our purse; or by our counsel and advice, or by our labour and pains.

And

And sure some one of these three things there is none so mean or inconsiderable in the world, but it is in his power to benefit his poor Neighbour with.

To the Souls of men we do good, whenever by our discourses or other endeavours we make men better or wiser; when we instruct the ignorant, when we satisfy the doubtful, when we reduce those that are misled by error, when we establish the weak, when we reprove those that do amiss; in a word, all our attempts and endeavours in what way soever to reclaim men from vice, and to bring them to wisdom and sobriety is a Charity to their Souls; and whether our designs succeed or not we shall be rewarded as those that have done good in the world.

Secondly, All the acts of Beneficence and kindness, nay even of Civility and good Nature, are to be accounted among the instances of doing good. A man doth good not only by acts of Charity properly so called, but by every courtesie that he doth to another; He doth good by shewing his respect and good will to all about him, by reconciling differences among neighbours, and promoting peace, friendship, and society as much as he can; by being Generous and Liberal and Hospitable according to his ability; by forgiving injuries, and if it be possible making friends of those that did them; by  
being

being easie of access, and sweet and obliging in his carriage; by complying with the infirmities of those he converseth with, and in a word, by contributing any way to make the lives of others more easie and comfortable to them.

Thirdly, A man also doth good when he makes use of that acquaintance or friendship or interest, that he hath with others to stir them up to the doing of that good which he by reason of the narrowness of his condition, or for want of Opportunity cannot do himself. This is a very considerable instance of doing good how slight soever it may seem; the man that exercises himself this way is doubly a benefactor; for he is not only an instrument of good to the person or persons for whom he beg'd the kindness or the charity; but he does also a real kindness to the man himself whom he puts upon the benefaction; for God will not less reward his good will for being excited by another.

Fourthly, Another way to do good is to be careful and diligent, and conscientious in the discharge of all those Publick Offices which we are call'd upon to execute in the place where we live. How burthensome soever these be, and how much soever of our time they rob us of, yet God by calling us to them, hath put a prize into our hands, (as the Wise man speaks) to do much good if we have hearts to make use thereof.

Fifthly,

*A Sermon preached*

Fifthly, We do good when being in a private Capacity we so carry our selves in all the Relations in which we stand as the nature of the Relation requireth. As for instance, when being Subjects we conscientiously obey the Laws of the Kingdom and submit to our Governours, and promote what we can the publick Peace both of Church and State. When being Masters of Families we take care of those under our Charge, making sufficient provision both for their Souls and bodies: When being Husbands or Wives we discharge faithfully all the Conjugal duties: When being Parents we love our children, and *bring them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord.* When being children *we obey our Parents in all things.* When being servants *we do our work in singleness of heart, not as men-pleasers but as those that account they have a Master in Heaven.* When having contracted friendships we are secret and faithful, and prudent in the maintaining and preserving of them; and so proportionably in all the other relations that we stand in. All these things though they appear little, yet are they in their degree a real good and benefit to mankind, and so necessary that there is no living tolerably without them.

Sixthly, We also do good by an honest and a diligent pursuit of our calling and employment. There is no Art or Trade that we are bred to, but if it be a lawful one, it may be of great use to the pub-

publick, and by well minding it, and fairly managing it we may render our selves very profitable members of the Common-wealth.

Seventhly and Lastly, We may do a great deal of good by our good Examples, by being to others Patterns of Piety and Prudence, of Diligence and Industry, of Peaceableness and Loyalty, of Humility and Meekness and Temperance. In a word, every man that will make himself Eminent in any Virtue will be a Light to the world, his life will be a constant Sermon, and he will often prove as effectual a Benefactor to those about him by his example as others are by their Counsels and Exhortations.

And now all these things considered, who is there among us in such deplorable Circumstances that he can reasonably pretend to want ability or opportunity to *do good in his life*? Sure I am he must live in a desert, and have no Communication with mankind that cannot some or other of these ways be useful and beneficial to them. And thus much of our Second Head of Discourse.

I now come in the Third and last place to make some Application of what hath been spoken.

And First, Since every man is so highly concern'd as we have seen, to do good in his life, let us all be perswaded seriously and heartily to apply our minds hereunto. Let us look upon it, not as a by-

D

work,

work, a thing to be done now and then as there is occasion after our own turns are served : But let us lay out our selves upon it, let us propose it to our selves as the great Business of our lives. Let us take all opportunities for it, let us contrive and manage all our affairs so that they may some way or other be subservient to the carrying on this great work.

Let this be the end of our gathering riches, and the measure of our expending them. To heap up riches that we may be rich, or to throw them away upon our lusts are both equally intolerable, it is the doing good with them that sanctifies both the getting and the spending them.

Let this be the compass to steer and direct us in our pursuit after knowledge, in our learning Arts and Sciences, in the managery of our Trades and employments; in a word, in the choice and in the prosecution of every design that is proposed to us. In all these things, the great enquiry is to be, what good will they tend to? How shall we be rendred more useful to the world, if our designs and endeavours as to these matters do take effect?

Let this be the great rule by which we proceed in the Education of our Children and Relations, and the provisions we make for them in the world. Let it be our first care to possess them with a deep sense of the duty they owe to the Publick, and to furnish them with such qualities as will render them profitable members of it, and to put them into such professi-

ons and employments as may afford them fair scope for the exercise of those qualities. If we thus provide for them, though we otherwise leave them never so small an Estate, yet with the Blessing of God they have a good Portion.

Lastly, let this design of doing good influence our very Offices of Religion. When we make our applications to the Throne of Grace, let us be sure to have the Publick always in mind; and even when we pray for our selves let it be with this design and resolution, that as God in mercy bestows upon us the Blessings and the Grace we pray for, we will employ them for the good of others.

O that we would thus seriously concern our selves in doing good! O that we would once lay aside all our little selfish designs, and that narrowness and penuriousness of Spirit with which most of us are bound up; and with ardent Love and Charity set our selves *not to seek his own but every man and others good*, as the Apostle exhorteth.

1 Cor. 10.  
24.

Secondly, if the doing good be so necessary a duty as hath been represented, what must we say of those men that frame to themselves Models of Christianity without putting this duty into its notion? There is a sort of Christianity which hath obtained in the world, that is made up of Faith and knowledge of the Gospel Mysteries, without any respect to Charity and good works. Nay have we not heard of a sort of Christianity, the very perfection of which



## A Sermon preached

seems to consist in the disparaging this duty of doing good as much as is possible; crying it down as a heathen virtue, a poor blind piece of Morality, a thing that will no way further our salvation; nay, so far from that, that it often proves a hindrance to it, by taking us off from that full relyance and recumbency that we ought to have on the Righteousness of Jesus Christ only, in order to our Salvation.

But O how contrary are these Doctrines to the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles! How widely different a thing do they make Christianity to be from what it will appear if we take our notions of it from their Sermons and Practices! Is it possible that he that went about doing good himself; made it his meat and drink, the business and employment of his life, should set so light by it in us that are his followers?

Is it possible that they that so often call upon us  
2 Tim. 6. 18. *to do good, to be rich in good works, above all things to have*  
1 Pet. 4. 8.  *fervent charity among our selves,* telling us that all faith is  
1 Cor. 13. 2, 13. *nothing, all knowledge of Mysteries is nothing, all gifts of*  
*Prophecy and Miracles are nothing, but that Charity is all*  
*in all, I say is it possible that they should think doing*  
*good so insignificant, so unprofitable, nay so dangerous*  
*a thing as these I spoke of do represent it?*

But I need not further reprove these Opinions because I hope they find but few Patrons; but this seriously ought to be reprov'd among us, viz. that we do not generally lay that stress upon this duty we are speaking of that we ought to do.

Many



Many are ready enough to acknowledge their Obligations to do good, and count it a very commendable thing, and a work that God will bless them the better for, yet they are loth to make it an essential ingredient of their Religion, they think they may be Religious and serve God without it. If they be but sober in their lives, and just in their dealings and come to Church at the usual times, they have Religion enough to carry them to Heaven, though in the mean time they continue covetous and hard and uncharitable, without bowels of pity and compassion, and make no use of their wealth, or their power and interest, or their Parts and industry, or their other Talents committed to them, for the doing good in the world.

Far be it from any man to pretend to determine what vertues or degrees of them are precisely necessary to Salvation, and what Vertues or degrees of them a man may safely be without: But this is certain, that charity and doing good are none of those that can be spared. The Scripture hath every where declared these qualities to be as necessary in order to our Salvation as any condition of the Gospel. Nay if we will consult *St. Math. 25.* where the Proceſs of the General Judgment is described, we shall find these to be the great points that at the last day men shall be examined upon, and upon which the whole case of their eternal state will turn. So that if we take the Scripture for our Guide, these men at last will

will be found to be much mistaken, and to have made a very false judgment both of Religion and of their own condition.

Thirdly, From what hath been said about doing good, we may gather wherein that Perfection of Christianity which we are to aspire after, doth consist. It has been much disputed which is the most Perfect life, to live in the world as other men do, and to serve God in following our employments, and taking care of our families, and doing good offices to our neighbors, and discharging all other duties that our relation to the publick requires of us ; or to retire from the world, and to quit all our secular concerns, and wholly to give up our selves to Prayer and Meditation, and those other exercises of Religion properly so called.

This latter kind of life is so magnified by the *Romanists* in comparison of the other, that it hath engrossed to it self the name of Religious. None among them are thought worthy to be styled Religious persons but those that Cloyster up themselves in a Monastery. But whatever excellence may be pretended in this course of life, it certainly falls much short of that which is led in a publick way. He serves God best that is most serviceable to his Generation. And no Prayers or Fasts or Mortifications are near so acceptable a Sacrifice to our Heavenly Father as to *do good in our lives.*

It is true, to keep within doors and to attend our devo-

devotions (though those that are in appearance most abstracted from the world, are not always the most devout persons) I say this kind of life is the most easie and the safer. A man is not then exposed so much to temptations; he may with less difficulty preserve his innocence; but where is the praise of such a vertue? Vertue is then most glorious and shall be most rewarded, when it meets with most tryals and oppositions.

And as for the bravery of contemning the world and all the Pumps of it, which they so magnifie in this kind of life, alas it is rather an effect of pusillanimity and love of our ease, and a desire to be free from cares and burdens, than of any true nobleness of mind. If we would live to excellent purpose indeed; if we would shew true bravery of spirit and true piety towards God, let us live as our blessed Lord and his Apostles did. Let us not fly Temptations but overcome them; let us not sit at home amusing our selves with our pleasing contemplations, when we may be useful and beneficial abroad. Let us so order our devotions towards God, that they may be a means of promoting our worldly business and affairs, and doing good among men. Let us take our fit times of retirement and abstraction that we may the more freely converse with God and pour out our souls before him; but let this be only to the end that we may appear abroad again more brisk and lively in vanquishing the Temptations that come in our way.

way, and more prompt and readily disposed to every good work: This is to imitate our Lord Jesus, to walk as we have him for an example. This is a life most suitable to the contrivance and the genius of his Religion, which is more accommodated to Cities and publick Societies, than to Cloysters and Deserts. And lastly this is to walk in a conformity to his command who hath bid us *make our light so to shine before men that they may see our good works and glorifie our Father which is in Heaven.*

Mat. 5. 16.

But Fourthly and lastly, If it be a thing so necessary that every man should do good in his life as hath been represented, then how much to be Reproved are they that do no good till their death! That live scrapingly and uncharitably and uselessly to the world all their lives long, and then when they come to dye, think to Atone for their sins and neglects of this kind, by shewing some extraordinary Bounty to the poor, or devoting some part of their estates to publick or pious uses.

I must confess this kind of proceeding doth to me seem just like the business of putting off a mans repentance to his death-bed. It is absolutely necessary that a man should repent though it be never so late; and so it is that he should do good: if he have done little good in his life, he is bound as he loves his soul to shew some extraordinary uncommon instances of Charity and a Publick spirit, when he comes to die. But then it is here as it is with the long delay-

delaying of Repentance, the deferring it so long has robbed the man of the greatest part of the praise and the comfort he might have expected from it. His Rewards in heaven will be much less though his good deeds should be accepted, but he is infinitely uncertain whether they will or no. It must be a very great act of Generosity and Charity that can obtain a pardon for a whole life of uncharitableness.

Let us all therefore labour and study *to do good in our lives*, let us be daily giving evidences to the world of our kind and charitable disposition, and let not that be the first which is discovered in our last Will and testament. If God hath blessed us with worldly goods, let us distribute them as we see occasion in our life time, when every one may see we do it voluntarily; and not stay till we must be forced to part with them whether we will or no, for that will blast the credit of our good deeds both with God and man.

I have said enough concerning the first point recommended in the Text, viz. *doing Good*. I now come briefly to Treat of the other, that is, *Rejoycing*, which is equally a part of the business of this day.

*There is no good (saith Solomon) in any earthly thing; or there is nothing better for any man than to rejoyce and to do good.*

The *Rejoycing* here recommended, is capable of two senses, the first more general and more concerning us as Christians, the other more particular and which more immediately concerns us as we are here met upon this occasion.

E

In

In the first place by *Rejoycing* we may take to be meant, a constant habit of joy and chearfulness, so that we are always contented and well pleased, always free from those anxieties and disquiets, and uncomfortable reflections that make the lives of mankind miserable. This now is the Perfection of *Rejoycing* and it is the utmost degree of Happiness that we are here capable of. It must be granted indeed that not many do arrive to this state, but yet I doubt not but that it is a state that may be attained at least in a great measure in this world. Otherwise the Holy men in Scripture, and particularly the Apostles of our Lord would never have recommended it to us so often as they have done. *Rejoyce evermore*, saith S. Paul to the *Thessalonians*, and to the *Philippians*, *Rejoyce in the Lord always, and again I say rejoyce.*

1 *Thess.* 5.  
16.  
*Phil.* 4. 4.

The way to attain to this happy condition doth consist chiefly in these three things: First a great innocence and virtue, a behaving our selves so in the world that our Consciences shall not reproach us. This St. Paul lays as the Foundation of *Rejoycing*, *This* (saith he) *is our rejoycing, the Testimony of our Conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity I have had my conversation in this world.* It is in vain to think of any true solid Joy or Peace or Contentment without a hearty practice of all the duties of our Religion, so that we can satisfie our selves of our own sincerity before God.

2 *Cor.* 1.  
12.

And then secondly to make us capable of this constant *Rejoycing* besides the innocence of our lives there must go a firm and hearty perswasion of Gods  
parti-



particular Providence; a belief that he not only dispense all events that come to pass in the world, even the most inconsiderable; but that the measure of the Dispensations of his Providence is infinite Wisdom and Goodness and nothing else: so that nothing doth or ever can happen to us in particular, or to the world in general but what is for the best. Now when we firmly believe this and frequently attend to it, how can we be either solicitous for the future or discontented at the present events of things, let them fall out never so cross to our desires and expectations? This is the best Antidote in the world (and an effectual one it is) against all trouble and vexation and uneasiness that can happen to us upon any occasion whatsoever, to wit, the consideration that all things are managed by an infinitely Wise and good God, and will at last prove for the best, how unaccountable soever they appear to us at present. And this is that which the wise man insinuates in the verse before the Text when he saith that *God hath made every thing beautiful in his season.*

Thirdly, Another requisite both for the procuring and preserving this continual chearfulness and rejoicing, is a frequent and fixed attention to the great rewards of the other world, which God hath promised to all that truly love him and endeavour to please him. This consideration will extreamly add to our comfort and contribute to our Rejoicing under all the miseries and afflictions that we can possibly fall into, namely, that whatsoever condition we are in here

2 Cor. 4.  
17.

we shall certainly in a little time be in a most happy and glorious one, and the worse our circumstances are in this life, the greater (if we be good) shall be our happiness in the next, for *these light afflictions* (as S. Paul tells us) *which indure but for a moment, do work for us a far more exceeding weight of glory.*

This then is the joy that we are to endeavour after in the first place, to be constantly well pleas'd and contented with our present condition, whatever it be, and these are the ways to attain to it.

But secondly, there is another more particular Notion of *Rejoycing*, and which I conceive Solomon doth chiefly intend in the words of the Text, and that is the free and comfortable enjoyment of the good things of this life that God hath blessed us with, in opposition to a pinching and penurious way of living. This I say seems to be the notion of *Rejoycing* that the Text speaks of, as appears by the following verse. Solomon having told us in the text, that there is nothing better for a man than to *rejoyce and do good*, he adds by way of explication of what he meant by *rejoycing*, these words, *that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labours, for it is the gift of God.* And frequently in this Book of Ecclesiastes doth he perswade to this kind of rejoycing. Thus in Chap. 2. ver. 24. *there is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour, this also I saw it was from the hand of God.* And in Chap. 5. v. 18. *Behold that which I have seen, it is good and comely for one to eat and drink,*



*drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labours that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life which God giveth him, for it is his portion. And in Chap. 6. v. 1, 2. he represents it as a great evil that he hath seen under the sun, and yet such an evil as is common among men, that a man to whom God hath given riches, and wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it, this (saith he) is vanity and an evil disease.*

And there is certainly great reason in what he saith. For to have a plentiful portion of the good things of this life, and not to have the heart to make use of them for the enjoyment of our selves and friends; for the refreshing us under the toyl that this life doth expose us to; for the promoting Acquaintance and Society, and the rendering our condition as easie as may be, is as unaccountable a folly as we can be guilty of, and makes us really as poor and necessitous as those that want bread, but only not so pitiable.

Taking now this to be the sence of *rejoycing* in the Text, (as I believe it is) we have from hence a good warrant for this days Meeting, for we come together to *rejoyce* in *Solomons* sence, that is, to eat and drink and to enjoy the good of our labours, it being the gift of God so to do.

And this practice of ours is not only reasonable in it self, but is commended to us by the example of Gods people both under the Law and the Gospel. The Jews by the appointment of God himself were to meet every year three times at *Jerusalem*, the Capital

City

See Dent.  
16.

City of the Nation to feast and to rejoyce before the Lord, as we have it in the exprels words of *Moses*. And the Christians for near two hundred years after our Saviour had their *Agape*, their Feasts of charity wherein they met together both poor and rich to enjoy and make merry one with another. It is true these Feasts were at length left off by common consent, because there grew abuses in them; they became occasions of Luxury and excess, and so matters of scandal to our Religion. But this was not an ill reflection upon the thing itself, which was innocent and commendable, but upon the *abuse* of the thing. A good and laudable institution was perverted to evil purposes. However this very consideration ought to make us very careful of our carriage and behaviour in these our Meetings, lest we fall under the same inconveniencies, which that we may prevent, Two things are especially needful to be taken care of by us.

First, That we do not exceed the bounds of *re-joycing* prescribed to Christians, that is, that we avoid all excess, and use the Creatures of God, soberly and temperately, so as to give offence to none, nor to *make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*.

And secondly, That we take care to perform and make good the ends and designs of these *Feasts of rejoycing*; which ends, if we will take our measures from those Laws that God gave to his own People in the Old Testament, and which the modern *Jews* themselves in their Commentaries take notice of; and which are

so reasonable in themselves that without any Authority they do recommend themselves to us, are these four following.

First, That we Rejoyce before the Lord, that is, that we make our humble acknowledgments and return our due praises and thanks to him for all the good things he hath blessed us with in our lives, confessing that all we have is from his free bounty and goodness, and that our Meeting together is to praise his name upon that account. And this was the thing that was meant by those solemn Sacrifices that the *Jews* were bound to offer at *Jerusalem* at their Annual Feasts.

The second end of these Feasts is to take occasion from hence to learn our duty, to be instructed in all the branches of that obedience we owe unto God. For as *Maimonides* observes, that was one of the principal reasons of Gods calling together all the people of the *Jews* to appear at the Feast of Tabernacles, to wit, that they might hear the Law read unto them; and this design is I suppose pursued by us in our chusing this Place to Assemble in.

A third end of these Feasts (as the same *Maimonides* tells us) & is manifest from Scripture is to promote acquaintance & Friendship, and brotherly love one with another. And this is a very noble end, and serves many excellent purposes, and nothing can be beyond it except

The fourth and last end of these Meetings, which is to do good; to exercise our Charity towards our poor indigent Brethren. No man at the Solemn Feasts of the

*Jews,*

Exod. 23.  
15.

*Jews, was to appear before the Lord empty. He was to bring his offering not only to God by way of recognition and acknowledgment to him: but for the poor also that they might rejoyce as well as he. This is well observed by Maimonides from Deut. 16. 14. where it is thus said, Thou shalt rejoyce in thy feast, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant and thy maid-servant, the Levite and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow that are within thy gates.*

This then is the great end of our Assembly, that not only we, but the Fatherless and the widow; all of our Countrey, that need our Charity, may rejoyce with us and for us. And this is that which Solomon joyns with rejoycing in the Text, *There is no good in them but for a man to rejoyce and do good*: and what that man who by the sentence of God was declared the wisest of all men hath thus joyned together, let none of us presume to put asunder. These are the Rules, and these are the ends that we are to observe in this our Feast; and let us all for the Honour of Christs Religion, and for the credit of our particular Countrey, charge the observation of them upon our selves: which if we can all resolve to do, I can safely apply to every one of you, that saying of Solomon in the 9th Chapter of this book of Ecclesiastes, and the 7th verse, with which I shall conclude: *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry-heart, for God now accepteth thy work.*

---

E R R A T A.

P Age 8. l. 6. it is that, r. it is that. p. 9 l penult. for in r, is. p. 13. l. 10. r. proposed.  
p. 14. l. 23, 24. for 147, r. ly.

F I N I S.

F. S. L.  
Dupl

A  
S E R M O N  
P R E A C H E D  
Before the Right Honourable  
T H E  
Lord MAYOR  
A N D  
A L D E R M E N  
O F  
L O N D O N.

At the S P I T T L E,

*April 14. 1680.*

---

By *JOHN SHARPE, D. D.* Rector of *St. Giles*  
in the Fields, and Chaplain to the Right Honour-  
able the Lord High Chancellour of *England.*

---

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Walter Kestilby* at the *Bishop's-Head,*  
in *St. Paul's Church-Yard.* 1680.

SEYMOUR

PREPARED

By the Hon. Secy. of the Interior

AND

OLD MAYOR

AND

ALDERMAN

OF

LONDON

A. de SITTER

Printed by

W. de SITTER, 10, N. de Water, Amsterdam.

1840

Printed by W. de SITTER, 10, N. de Water, Amsterdam.

~~THE RIGHT HONOURABLE~~  
~~THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON~~  
To the Right Honourable  
Sir ROBERT CLAYTON,  
Lord MAYOR  
OF  
LONDON:  
And to His  
LADY.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

I Make bold to prefix both Your Names  
to his Sermon, though it was at Your  
Request, MADAM, that I published it, not  
only because I have received many Obligations  
from You both, which I take this Opportunity  
to acknowledge and thank You for:  
But also because You are both known to be



## The Epistle DEDICATORY.

*Eminent Examples of that Virtue which is  
in the following Discourse Recommended.  
May all in Your Circumstances imitate You  
herein; and may You always be in a condi-  
tion to be Patterns to others. Thus prayeth,*

Your most Obliged  
and Humble Servant,

J. SHARPE.



## A Sermon preached

abound; and upon this consideration he inserts those words I have now read, *charge them that are rich in this world, &c.*

How famous soever the City of *Ephesus* was at that time for Wealth or Trade; there is little doubt to be made, that this City of ours (praised be God for it) doth in those respects, at this day, equal, if not much exceed it. And therefore that which *S. Paul* thought of so great importance as to give especial orders to *Timothy*, to press upon the *Ephesian* Citizens, will always be very fit to be seriously recommended to you in this place; and more especially at this time, since it is the proper work of the day. Waving therefore wholly the argument of our Saviours *Resurrection*, upon which you have before been entertained; I apply my self without farther preface to conclude this *Easter-Solemnity* with that, with which *St. Paul* concludes his Epistle, viz. with a short discourse of the *Rich mans great duty and concernment*, which is in these words plainly set forth to us.

In them we may take notice of these three Generals, which I shall make the heads of my following discourse.

First, The duty it self incumbent upon those *that are rich in this world*, expressed in several particulars.

Secondly, the great Obligation that lies upon them to the performance of it, which we may gather  
ther

ther from the vehemence and the Authority with which St. Paul orders *Timothy* to press it, charge them (saith he) that are rich, that they be not, &c.

Thirdly, the mighty encouragement they have to observe this charge, for hereby, they lay up to themselves in store a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

First, I begin with the Rich mans duty, which is here expressed in Four points, two of them Negative, teaching what things he ought to avoid; the other two positive, teaching what he ought to practise. They are these,

- I. That he should not be high minded.
- II. That he should not trust in uncertain riches.
- III. That he should trust in the living God.
- IV. That he should do good, be rich in good works, &c.

The First thing that is given in charge to all those that are rich in this world, is that they be not high minded, *μη ὑψηλοφρονεῖν*, that they do not think too well of themselves for being rich, and take occasion from thence to despise others that are in meaner circumstances than they. They are not to value themselves a jot the more, or to think worse of others upon account of that outward fortune they are possessed of, but are in all their conversation to

express the same moderation and humanity and easiness and obligingness of temper to those they have to do with, even the meanest and the poorest, as if they stood with them upon the same level.

And with very great reason hath *St. Paul* given this caution to rich men. For by the experience of the world it hath been always found, that wealth is apt to puff up, to make men look big, and to breed in them a contempt of others; but what little ground there is for this, is easily seen by any that will give themselves leave to consider.

For what doth any of these worldly goods ( which make us keep at distance ) really add to a man in point of true worth and value? do they either recommend him more to God or to wise men or even to himself, if he have a grain of sense in him, than if he was without them? certainly they do not. For that for which either God approves us, or wise men esteem us, or we can speak peace and content to our selves, is not any thing without us, any thing that fortune hath given to us; but something that we may more truly call our own, something that we were neither born with, nor could any body hinder us of, nor can be taken from us, that is to say, the Riches of our minds, our Virtuous and commendable qualities.

A man is no more a fit object of esteem, merely for being rich, than the beast he rides on ( if I may  
use

use the old comparifon ) is of commendation for the costly Trappings he wears.

Secondly, Another caution given to those that are rich in this world, is, *that they should not trust in uncertain riches.* This likewise is a temptation to which they are exposed, and our Saviour hath very lively set it forth to us in the Parable of the *Rich man* in the Gospel, who having got mighty possessions, and filled his barns, thought of nothing further; but presently saith to himself, *soul take thy ease, eat, drink and be merry, for thou hast goods laid up for many years:* But the conclusion of that parable doth sufficiently shew the vanity and ridiculousness of this *trusting in our riches*, for a message comes to him from God, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, and then whose shall all these things be that thou hast provided?* It is the greatest madness in the world to please, or speak peace to our selves upon account of that, which we are not sure to enjoy a day, but we may for any thing we know be snatch'd away the next moment into another world, and so must leave the joy and pride of our hearts to we know not whom.

But supposing we had some certainty of our lives, and could promise our selves that we should not leave our wealth for some competent time, yet we have no certainty that our wealth will not leave

Luke 12.  
16, &c.

us. How prosperous soever our present circumstances be, yet we cannot ensure the continuance of them; there are a thousand accidents may happen every day which may strip us as naked as when we came into the world; and we may be reduced to the extremities of those who are now the greatest objects of our compassion and charity; and this is that which *St. Paul* in the Text insinuates when he calls them *uncertain riches*. But what are we then to trust in, if not in these things? this *St. Paul* shews in the words following which make

The Third instance of the Rich mans duty, *Let them* (saith he) *trust in the living God, who giveth to all men richly to enjoy*. The sence of it is this: Let them from the bottom of their hearts acknowledge God to be the Author and giver of all that they possess: How much soever their Heads projected, or their Hands laboured, or their Parents and Friends were kind to them; yet it is the Providence of the Almighty to which they owe all. The same divine foresight and contrivancethat feeds the Fowls of the air, and clothes the Flowers of the field, doth also give them richly all things to enjoy; and therefore upon that Providence are they entirely to depend, as much exercising Faith in God, and reposing confidence in him, as if they had no visible provisions made for them: And as heartily returning thanks to their  
great



great Benefactor for every blessing they have (seem it never so much their own already,) as a hungry man that knows not where to get a meal, would to him that should give him a plentiful entertainment. In a word, those that have all things in this world must as devoutly look up to God, both in gratefully ascribing to him every enjoyment either past or present, and in a full trust and reliance upon him for what is to come, as those that live from hand to mouth; since it is the same divine Providence that feeds and maintains both the Poor and the Rich, and of his infinite goodness gives to all that fear him, even to the poor as well as the rich, all things to enjoy; and though to the one more plentifully, yet to the other perhaps with as much content though not in so great abundance.

The Fourth and last part of the Rich mans duty here mentioned concerns the right use of that wealth that God hath given him. Now the right use of Riches according to the Text doth consist in these things. That those that have them *do good* with them, *that they be rich in good works*, that they be *ready to distribute, willing to communicate.*

If we suppose every one of these distinct phrases in the Text, to denote a distinct thing, then we are to give this account of the passage, That *S. Paul* here useth a gradation in his speech, begins with  
the

the lowest and most general expressions of Charity, and so goes on to higher degrees of it; in each following phrase intending to say something more great or particular than what he had said in the former, which is a most usual and elegant scheme of Rhetorick. According to this account (as the words are very capable of it) there are four things here prescribed to the rich man in the use of his riches.

1. That he do good with them, that is the most general point, that is, that he imploy them some way or other for the benefit of others. He must not live to himself alone, he must design greater things than the getting an estate, or the raising a family; if others be not advantaged by him, he is rich to no purpose. And therefore it will concern him to do kindneses and good offices where he can, to be liberal and Hospitable, to oblige his Friends and Relations all ways possible, to assist all about him with his counsel, to encourage them by his example; in a word, to make use of that Interest and Reputation that his fortune hath given him above others, to do kindneses to them.

2. He must not think it sufficient to do this good now and then, upon particular and more rare occasions; but he must abound in acts of goodness. That is the meaning of the Apostles second expression of being *rich in good works*. He must so study and improve in the Art of doing good, that  
his

his good deeds do equal his riches, nay the words import that his true riches are only placed in, and to be measured by his good deeds. He is not to think himself farther rich than he is rich in good works. The more plentifully God hath blessed him with worldly wealth, the more diligent and industrious and solicitous he must be to do good with it, otherwise he is poorer than those that perhaps he now and then out of charity relieves.

And 3ly, Lest this *doing good*, and *being rich in good works* should only be interpreted of doing such kindnesses and good deeds that cost us nothing but the expence of our time or the employment of our pains, or the use of our interest with others; the Apostle adds this further thing, that the Rich man must be *ready to distribute*; that is, very free to part with his money according to the proportion God hath blessed him with, upon every occasion of real and useful charity; whether that charity be of a more publick nature, as for instance, when it is expressed for the advancing Religion and the service of God, or for the making standing provisions for the poor, or lastly, any way for the serving the necessities, or increasing the conveniencies of the place where we live, by any publick useful benefaction: Or 2ly, whether this charity be of a more private nature, extending no farther than to particular persons that come in our way, whom

we are convinced to be real objects of it; to these likewise we must be ready to distribute; every poor necessitous person hath a right to part of what we have, if we can really satisfy our selves, that our alms will do him a real good, and will not be any great prejudice to us.

But 4<sup>thly</sup> and lastly, the Apostle adds another thing to all this, and that is, that the Rich man must *be willing to communicate*. If the sense of this phrase be different from the former it will seem to import yet a higher degree of Liberality. It will import that Rich men should be of such publick spirits, and so little esteem their wealth their own, that it should in a manner be made a common thing, where in all should share as there was occasion. This is the notion of *κοινωνία* or *communicating* as it was used in the beginning of Christianity. S. Luke in *Acts* 2. having told us that the first Christians continued in the Apostles doctrine, and in communicating, presently explains what he meant by that communion. *All (saith he v. 44.) that believed were together and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need.*

God be thanked the Church of Christ is not now in such circumstances that it is either needful or reasonable precisely to observe the practice of those times as to this matter. We are not only not obliged to  
part

part with the propriety of our estate, and to live in common as the first persecuted Christians did, but we should be highly indiscreet, not to say injurious, both to our selves and the publick, if we did. But this notwithstanding, their practice and the charge here laid upon us to be *communicative* will thus far oblige us, viz, that we Christians should always retain that publick generous spirit that they in the first times were acted with. We should sit so loose from the world, and so unconcerned in the distinction of *meum* and *tuum*, that we should make it our business to do good with what we have, thinking our wealth best employed when it is put to that use. And when the cause of God, and the common interest of our Christian Brethren doth require it, we should then as freely part with all we have as our Predecessors in Christianity did, Following herein the Precept of our Lord to the young man who came to enquire of him what he should do that he might inherit eternal life, and who was thus answered by our Saviour, that though he had kept the Commandments, yet he wanted one thing to make him perfect (that is to make him a True Christian) and that was, *to sell all that he had and give to the poor and come and follow him, and then he should have treasure in Heaven, Mat. 19. 21.*

## *A Sermon preached*

Thus have I given you a brief account of each particular of the Rich mans duty as it is summ'd up in the Text; and some perhaps will think it is severe enough; whether it be so or no, I now dispute not, but I am sure it is severely required of them. This we may gather from *S. Pauls* way of urging it, *charge them* (saith he) *that are rich in this world that they be not high minded, &c.* He doth not say, recommend this to them as a thing that is very reasonable in it self, and will highly become them; he doth not say, put them in mind of it as a thing by which they may gain a great deal of Honour and reputation to their Religion; he doth not say, exhort and perswade them to it, as a thing that will at last conduce to their own advantage: But he saith, *charge is upon them*, intimating that there was a necessity they should thus practise, it was a duty indispensably incumbent upon all of them; and this is the Second General Point I am to insist on.

And certainly this order of *S. Paul* to *Timothy* is a standing warrant, a perpetual commission to all Ministers of the Gospel to charge the same thing upon all Rich men in all places and times. But in the pressing and enforcing this charge I shall not so much have regard to the three former duties as to the last, which concerns the doing good with our wealth, the exercising acts of Bounty and  
Charity

Charity as we have opportunity. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.*

Now in Four respects especially, Rich men are thus to be charged, and a necessity lies upon them to practise accordingly, viz.

In point of  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Gratitude,} \\ \text{Justice,} \\ \text{Religion,} \\ \text{Self-preservation.} \end{array} \right.$

If all these put together do not make the obligation indispensable I know not what will. I will speak briefly of each particular,

First, if Rich men do not thus employ their wealth, they are guilty of great *Ingratitude*. That is the least evil imputation they fall under, and yet to any ingenuous man it is heavy enough, for to call a man *Unthankful* is as great a reproach as you can cast upon him.

Whoever acknowledgeth the Being of God, and owns his Providence in the world, must necessarily believe that all that portion of good things which he enjoys in this life doth proceed from that God as the Author and Fountain, though they be immediately conveyed to him by the Ministry of second



cond Causes; and his Reason and Humanity will suggest to him, that there are some returns of Gratitude to be made to Him that of his free bounty hath thus obliged him; but what returns can he make to God for his blessings, other than in communicating those blessings among his fellow creatures? To think that a verbal acknowledgment of God's favours is a suitable return, is against the common sense of mankind, who know that there goes more to a mans being truly grateful than the entertaining the person that obliged him with fair speeches and professions of his Obligations: And on the other side, to think of requiting God in a proper sence, by returning real kindnesses to him, for those he hath done to us, is equally absurd; for all the services we can pay to him, cannot add any thing to his infinite Blessedness. How then must we express our thankfulness for the wealth that he hath bestowed upon us? why he himself hath prescribed the way to us. He hath devolved his right to our kindness upon our Brethren. He hath deputed them to receive the real testimonies of our gratitude to him, and whatsoever obligations we put upon them, he takes them as an expression of our Love and thankfulness to him.

This our Saviour himself hath told us in express words, in the 25 of *S. Matt. Inasmuch* (saith he) *as ye have done it, i. e. done acts of kindness and charity to*

one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. And the charitable contributions of the Hebrew Christians to their indigent brethren, is by S. Paul styled a work and labour of love shewed to God himself, Heb. 6. If therefore Rich men would not be unkind and ingrateful to him that gave them all they have; there is a necessity they should do good, &c.

Secondly, The Practice of this must likewise be charged upon them in point of Justice as well as Gratitude, it is a piece of dishonesty not to do good with the wealth that God hath given us, for it is a falsifying our trust, it is an embezzling our Masters goods, and putting them to quite other uses than those he gave us them for. We are not to think that God ever made a man rich for his own sake alone, for the serving his own turns, and the satisfaction of his own private desires without respect to the community. No at the best we are but the Stewards of Gods blessings. A stock of Talents he hath committed to all of us, to some in greater and to others in smaller proportions, and out of this stock he hath given us leave to make provision for the necessities and conveniencies of our selves and our families; but we must not think all our own that accrues to us, so that it is at our liberty whether we will hoard it up or spend it profusely. No, we must have regard to the rest of our Masters servants. After we have served our own needs we must

must dispense the surpluse among the family of God, otherwise we are false and wicked Stewards, we abuse and misemploy our Masters Talents, and a severe account we shall one day render for so doing.

Thirdly, Mens Religion and Christianity are also deeply concerned in this point. Works of Charity are so essential to all Religion, and more especially to that which we call Christian, that without them it is but an empty name in whosoever professes it. Let men pretend what they will, let them be never so Orthodox in their belief, or regular in their conversation, or strict in the performance of those duties that relate to the worship of God, yet if they be hard hearted and uncharitable, if God hath given them wealth, and they have not hearts to do good with it, they have no true piety towards God. They may have a name to *live*, but they are really *dead*. An unmerciful Christian, or a Religious covetous man, are terms that imply a contradiction. For the satisfying you of this, I shall but need to put these following questions.

Can that man be accounted Religious that neither loves God nor his neighbour? sure he cannot, for these two things are the whole of Religion as the Holy Scripture often assures us; but now the Covetous man neither doth the one nor the other. His neighbor he doth not love, that is certain; for  
if

if he did they would find some fruits of it ; unless this be to be accounted love to give them good words, to say to a brother or a sister that is naked and destitute of daily food, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, when <sup>James 2.</sup> notwithstanding they give them not those things that be <sup>14. &c.</sup> needful for the body. But this kind of love S. James hath long ago declared not to be worth any thing. And as for the love of God another Apostle hath put it out of doubt, that the uncharitable man hath no such thing in him. *Whoso* (saith S. John) *hath* <sup>1 John 3.</sup> *this worlds good and seeth his brother have need, and shut-* <sup>17.</sup> *teth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? For he that loveth not his brother* <sup>cap. 4. 20.</sup> *whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

Can he be thought a Religious man or a true Christian, that wants the two main qualifications that go to the making up a Disciple of Christ, that is to say, *Faith* and *Repentance*? yet this doth he that is rich in this world, but is not rich in good works. Good works are the very soul of Faith, and it is no more alive without them than the Body is without the Spirit, as S. James has expressly told us. If <sup>James 2.</sup> we mean that our Faith should avail us any thing, <sup>26.</sup> it must work (or be made perfect) by Charity, <sup>Gal. 5. 6.</sup> saith S. Paul, for though a man have all faith so that he could remove mountains, i. e. though he be so heartily perswaded of the truth of Christs Religion as in

1 Cor. 13.

2.

ver. 3.

the strength of his belief to be able to work miracles, as was usual in the first times of Christianity, yet if he have not charity his Faith is nothing. If it be said that the charity that *S. Paul* makes so necessary to effectual Faith, is not giving alms but quite another thing, for according to him a man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and yet want the Charity that he speaks of: I answer, it is true a man may give alms, and very largely, and yet want that Charity that *S. Paul* here so much recommends; but then on the other side, none can have that Charity that he speaks of, but they will certainly express it in alms and bounty as they have ability and opportunity: so that for all this suggestion Alms and bounty are absolutely necessary to the efficacy of Faith if there be opportunity of doing them: The plain account of this matter is this, *S. Paul* speaks of Charity with respect to its inward principle in the heart, which consists in an universal kindness and good will to the whole Creation of God; and we speak of it with respect to the outward fruits of it in the life and conversation, which are all sorts of good works, especially works of mercy and bounty: but both these come to the same thing as to our purpose, for the one always follows the other; wherever there is charity in the heart it must of necessity shew it self in these kind of actions as there is occasion, otherwise the  
chari-

charity is not true but only pretended, for as S. John hath told us, *He that loveth* (ὁ ἀγαπᾷ) *in truth, must love* ὁ ἐργᾷ *in work and in deed.*

And then as for *Repentance*; Charity and Alms-giving is a necessary ingredient into that also. When S. John Baptist came preaching Repentance Luke 3. 10. unto Israel, the people asked him saying *what shall we do?* meaning in what manner they should expresse their Repentance: his answer was this, *He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat let him do so likewise;* and suitable to this was the Prophets advice to the King of Babylon, when he exhorteth him to Repentance, *break off thy sins* (saith he) *by righteousness, and thy iniquity by shewing mercy to the poor;* that is, evidence thy Repentance by thy Alms-giving and Charity. Dan. 4. 27.

Furthermore, can he be either a good man or a good Christian, that lives in the habitual neglect of that, which of all other virtues God in Scripture seems to set the greatest value upon; and contrariwise practiseth that which God hath most particularly declared his hatred and aversion to? yet thus doth he that is not charitable with what he hath. So highly acceptable to God are works of mercy and charity, that they are declared to be *the sacrifices with which he is well pleased,* Heb. 13. 8. *the things in which he doth delight,* Jerem. 9. 24. and *blessed and happy* are they pronounced that do them, Prov. 22. 9.



cap. 14. 21. for hereby men become *the children of God*, Luke 6. 35. and entitled to his more especial care and protection, Ps. 41. 1, &c. nay so dear do they render a man to his Maker, that the wise son of Sirach scrupled not to recommend the practice of them in these terms, *Be thou (saith he) a Father to the fatherless and instead of a husband unto their mother, so shalt thou be as the Son of the most high, and he shall love thee more than thy own mother doth.*

Ecclus. 4.  
10.

On the other side, if we will believe the Scripture, there is nothing more odious to God than the contrary qualities and practices. *The love of money*, which is the foundation of all uncharitableness, is in Scripture called *the root of all evil*; as certainly the greatest evils and mischiefs in the world do often take their beginning from thence. Those that are *covetous* are styled by the name of *Idolaters*, than which no more hateful appellation can be given to a man in the Sacred language. It is said of the *covetous* that *God abhorreth them*; which implies the utmost aversion that the Divine nature is capable of, to any sort of men or things. The uncharitable and hard-hearted men God hath declared he will have no mercy on; *but they shall have judgment without mercy that have shewed no mercy.*

1 Tim. 6.  
10.

Eph. 5. 5.

Ps. 10. 3.

Jam. 2. 13.

Fourthly and lastly, a necessity there is, that *those that are rich in this world, should do good and be rich in good works, &c. upon their own account.* Though there



there were no other tie upon them, yet self-love and self-preservation would oblige them to it. I meddle not here, how far in point of worldly interest they are concerned to be charitable; though even the motives drawn from hence are very considerable. For certainly, charity is a means not only to preserve and secure to them what they have, and to make them enjoy it more comfortably, but also to increafe their store. No man is ever poorer for what he gives away in useful charity, but on the contrary he thrives better for it. God seldom fails, in this world amply to repay what is thus lent to him, besides the other blessings that accompany his store, and go along with it to his children after him. This I am sure is solemnly promised, and in the ordinary dispensations of Providence we see it generally made good: whereas to the greedy and penurious man, all things fall out quite contrary; he may have wealth, but he hath little comfort in it; for a curse generally attends it, of which he feels the sad effects in a variously miserable and vexatious life, and often in either having none, or an unfortunate posterity.

But this is not the thing that I mean to insist on. This world lasts but for a while, and it is no great matter how we fare in it; but we have souls that must live for ever. If therefore men have any kindness for them, if they mean not to be undone.

to

to all eternity, it is absolutely necessary they should do good with what they have. O that uncharitable Rich men would think upon that woe that our

*Luke 6. 24.* Saviour pronounceth against them. *Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation.* O

that they would seriously consider and often remember those words of Abraham to the Rich man

*Luke 16.  
25.*

in Hell, Son (saith he) remember that thou in thy life receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.

Not that it is a crime to be rich, or to have good things in our life; no, it is the inordinate love of their wealth (to which those that have it are too frequently prone) and their not employing it to those purposes of doing good for which it was given; it is these things that bring these curses upon them, and really make it easier, without an Hyperbole, for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, *Luke 18. 25.*

Certain it is there is no one sin that can be named, doth more fatally exclude from Salvation than this we are speaking of. We never find the Prophets, or the Apostles giving a list of those black crimes that will involve all that are guilty of them in inevitable destruction, but we are sure to meet with covetousness, and all the attendants of it among them; as many instances might be given. Nay so great is this sin of uncharitableness, and not doing good

good with our wealth, that God in the final sentence that he shall pass upon wicked men, to their condemnation at the last day, seems to take no notice of the other sins and crimes of their life, but only to censure them for this. Thus we find that when the King, having gathered all nations before him, comes to pronounce the sentence upon those on his left hand, who are those that are doomed to everlasting fire; there is no mention made of their criminal actions; they are not condemned for fraud and oppression, for unbelief and irreligion, for lewdness and debauchery, though any of these be enough to damn a man: but merely for their not doing good, for their not relieving the necessitous, and exercising other acts of Charity when it was in their power.

*Math. 25.  
31, &c.*

Since now from these Considerations it doth appear how necessary, how indispensable a duty it is to do good with what we have, to be rich in good works, to be ready to distribute, and willing to communicate; let me at this time charge all of you that are rich in this world; as you would not be unthankful to your great Benefactor, nor unjust to your neighbours; as you have any piety towards God, or any care of your own souls, that you put it in practice. And two instances of this great duty the present occasion, and the exigence of things doth ob-

ob-

oblige me more particularly to recommend to you.

The first is the business of the Hospitals; the encouraging and promoting that Charity which the piety of our Ancestors begun, and whose examples their Successors have hitherto worthily followed, and of which we see excellent effects at this day; for this we need no better proof than the Report given in of the great number of poor Children, and other poor people maintained in the several Hospitals, under the pious care of the Lord Mayor, Commonalty, and Citizens of *London* the year last past.

For these so great instances of Charity what have we to do, but with all Gratitude to commemorate those noble and publick spirits that first began them; and with all devotion to put up our prayers to God for all those now alive that have been promoters and encouragers of such good works; and lastly, with all chearfulness and diligence to follow these Patterns by liberally contributing to their Maintenance and advancement. These are the Publick Banks and Treasuries in which we may safely lodge that money which we lend out to God, and may from him expect the Interest. O what comfort will it be to us when we come to dye, to be able to say to our selves, That  
portion

portion of goods that God hath in his Providence dispensed to me, I have neither kept unprofitably in a Napkin, nor squander'd it away upon my lusts, but part of it I have put out towards the restoring my miserable Brethren to the right use of their reason and understanding; part of it to the amending mens manners, and from idle and dissolute persons, redeeming them to virtue and sobriety, and making them someway profitable to the Publick; part of it for the healing the sick, and curing the wounded, and relieving the miserable and necessitous; and lastly, another part of it towards the Educating poor helpless Children in useful arts for their bodies, and in the Principles of True Religion for their Souls, that so both in their Bodies and Spirits they may be in a capacity to Glorifie God, and to serve their Countrey. These are all great things, and in which way soever of them we lay out our selves, we serve excellent ends of Charity.

But there is another point of useful publick Charity, which though the occasion of this meeting hath nothing to do with it, yet the present necessity of the thing doth oblige me seriously to recommend to you. There are few I believe in this City either ignorant, or insensible of the extreme numberousness of Beggars in our Streets, and unless care be taken, their number is likely to increase;

E

for

for this seems to be a growing evil. I dare not lay the fault of this upon the defectiveness of our Laws, nor dare I say, that the provisions made for the poor, are incompetent or disproportionable to the number of them; for perhaps the usual publick Taxes, and private Free-will offerings discretely managed, would go a great way towards the curing this evil; supposing the richer Parishes to contribute to the maintaining the poorer. But here is the misery, we do not sufficiently distinguish between our poor; nor take care to make provisions for them, according to their respective necessities. There are some that by reason either of old age, or evil accidents, are perfectly unable to earn a livelihood for themselves; or to be any way useful to the publick, except by their Prayers and their good examples; and to see such go a begging is a shame to our Christianity, and a reproach to our Government. There are others that are fit to labour, and might prove useful members of the Commonwealth many ways, if they were rightly managed: now the True Charity to these is not to relieve them, to the encouragement of their idleness; but to employ them, to put them into such a way that they may both maintain themselves and help towards the maintaining of others; and if they refuse this, let them suffer for their folly; for there is no reason that those should eat that will not work  
if

if they be *able*. A necessity therefore there is if ever this scandalous publick nuisance of common begging be redressed, that these four things be taken care of. 1. That those that cannot work be maintained without begging. 2. That those that can work and are willing, have such publick provisions made that they may be employed in one way or other, according as they are capable, and every one receive fruits of his labour proportionable to his industry. 3. That those that can work and will not, be prosecuted according to the Laws, as Rogues and Vagrants and pests of the Kingdom. And lastly, after such publick provisions are made for the maintaining both sorts of Poor that are objects of Charity; that is, the helpless, and those that endeavour to help themselves; that all persons be exhorted and directed to put their private Charity in the right Channel, wholly withdrawing it from the lazy and the lusty Beggars, lest they be thereby encouraged in their infamous course of life, and giving it to those who by publick order shall be recommended to them.

These things I hope I may without offence recommend to the Wisdom and Care of the Government of this Honourable City, since there are both *Heads* enough to contrive the particular ways of curing these evils, and *Hands* enough that will be open to contribute what is needful to so useful a



work. Certain it is the thing is practicable, since it hath been, and is practised in some Towns of this Nation, and in several beyond the Seas. And that it is needful, there is none that hath any true sense of Charity ( which consists as much in taking care to prevent the miseries and necessities of mankind, as in relieving them ; ) there is none that hath any regard to the Reputation of our Religion, or the Honour and good Government of this City or Kingdom, but must needs acknowledge.

It is one of the great Glories of this City, that as they have been always faithful and prudent in the management of those Publick Charities that they have been entrusted with, so have they been very ready to encrease and to add to them. And God without doubt hath blessed them the more for this very thing ; as indeed the best atonement that any people can make for the many sins that the place is guilty of, is the Sacrifice of Alms and Charity. And I hope that which condemned *Sodom* ; to wit, that *there were not ten righteous men found in it* ( that is, men that were of a Publick spirit, that were truly Liberal, and Bountiful, and Charitable, for that is an usual Notion of *Righteousness* in the Old Testament, and there are some passages in this History which make it probable that it may be the notion of it here ) I say that very thing it is to be hoped, hath, and will preserve this City of ours ;  
be-

because, as far as we can gather, there are in it many times ten such Righteous persons. In truth if there were not several good men among us, that by the exemplarity of their lives, and their Charity, do stand in the gap between the reigning sins of the times, and the Judgments of God that threaten us for them; it would be a melancholy thing to think what would become of us. But so long as God is pleased to continue to us a succession of those that fear God, and hate covetousness; that make it their business to do good and to serve their generation, there is hopes that he will yet continue to bless us. And so gracious hath God been to our City and Kingdom in this respect, that (to the glory of his name be it spoken) whatever boasts they of the Church of *Rome* are wont to make of the Charitableness of their Religion, in opposition to the penurioulness of ours; and reproach us with the bounty and munificence of our Popish Ancestors, and the barrenness of their Protestant Successors: yet we may safely affirm that there have been more publick works of Charity done in this City and Kingdom since the Reformation, than can be proved to have been done in the same compass of years during all the time that Popery prevailed among us.

O therefore let us go on to do this Honour to our Religion, let us go on by our good works to adorn

adorn the doctrine of God that we profess. Let us not only equal but labour to exceed the Piety and the Publick-spiritedness of our Forefathers. Let every one both Magistrates and People in their several capacities, be zealous and vigorous both in consulting, in contriving, and in acting for the publick good as much as is possible.

And for your greater encouragement thus to do, let it be remembred, in the last place, that besides the outward advantages both publick and private that we reap by being charitable; this is the best course we can take to secure our everlasting Happiness in the world to come. For *to do good with our wealth, to be rich in good works, to be ready to distribute, willing to communicate, is* (as the Apostle in the Text tells us) *the way to lay up to our selves in store a good Foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life.* And this is the Third thing I am to insist on from the Text.

I mean not here to trouble you with the Criticisms about the word *ῥησιν* in the Text, by disputing whether it should be render'd *Foundation* as it is in our Translation; though to lay up a foundation seems an unusual way of speaking; we do not lay up Foundations but build upon them: or whether the word should be taken to signifie the *Bond* or the *Evidence* that God hath given us for the

per-

performance of his part of the Covenant; as it is used by this Apostle elsewhere, where he tells us that the *Foundation of God standeth sure having this seal*, 2 Tim. 2. 19. that is to say, that Covenant or Indenture, that God hath made with mankind, standeth sure, and hath this seal put to it; for men do not put seals to foundations but to Covenants: Or lastly, whether the word should be rendred a *Treasure*, so as to read the Text thus, *laying up to themselves a good Treasure against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life*] The original word (say the Learned) is capable of being Translated all these ways, and the last seems as natural as any; for to lay up Treasure to our selves against the time to come, is a proper way of speaking, and that which our Saviour frequently useth in that very thing we are here treating of. But it matters not much which of them we pitch upon, for they all come to one sense; and that is this, That to be very charitable in this world is a good means to secure to our selves a title to eternal happiness in the next.

*Vid. Dr. Hammond in loc.*

But to prevent all misunderstanding, that may happen of this point, I desire before I speak directly to it, to premise these two things.

First, Though we do maintain with the Ancient Church, the efficacy of Charity and good works for the furthering a mans Salvation, yet we utterly reject those doctrines which the Modern

Roma-

Romanists have advanced in this matter. The Popish doctrines about good works are these three following, That good works are meritorious; do deserve the Favour and the Rewards of God Almighty. Again, that the surplusage of a mans good works, that is to say, the merits of so many of his good deeds, as are over and above what is sufficient to save his own soul, may by the Church be dispensed out to the benefit of others, they being part of the Churches treasure; and upon this foundation they ground their Indulgences. And lastly, that good works, i. e. the Alms of dying persons, that are given to the Church or Clergy, will by the means of the *Masses* and *Diriges* that they purchase to be said for them, be effectual for the freeing their souls out of the Torments of *Purgatory*. These are the Popish doctrines concerning good works, which we all justly reject, as having no foundation in Scripture, or good Antiquity; and being apparently contrived for the promoting their secular gain and advantage. But then as for the necessity, or the conduciveness of good works to a mans Salvation, which is all we here plead for, I know no good Protestant but doth as earnestly contend for it as any of that Communion.

Secondly, Whatever efficacy we attribute to works of Charity as a means for the obtaining eternal life; we would not be understood hereby to

exclude the necessary concurrence of other virtues and graces to that end. It doth not from hence follow, that it is an indifferent matter, what Religion a man is of, or what kind of life he leads, if he be but mighty bountiful to the poor, and do a great deal of good in his life. No, how acceptable to God soever the Sacrifice of Alms and Charity be, yet we are not to expect, it shall be available to our Salvation, unless it proceed from a pure heart, and be offered with a lively Faith in Jesus Christ, and accompanied with a sincere endeavour to obey all Gods Commandments. Eternal Happiness is not proposed in the Gospel, as a reward of any one single virtue, no not of the greatest, but of all of them together; if indeed there can be any true virtue where there is not a conjunction of all; I say if there can be, for S. James seems to affirm that there cannot. *Whosoever* (saith he) *Jam. 2. 10.*  
*shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

But now having said this by way of caution to prevent all occasion that any may take from our so earnestly pressing Charity, to undervalue and neglect other duties: It cannot be denyed on the other side, that very great effects are by our Saviour and his Apostles, ascribed to this virtue with respect to mens Salvation in the other world.



Luk. 6. 30.  
35.

In the 6th of S. Luke, our Lord thus advileth, Love (saith he) your enemies, give to him that asketh, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, so shall your reward be great, and ye shall be the children of the most highest. Now sure to be entitled to great rewards, and to be the children of the most high doth look farther than this present world. Our Saviour without doubt means the same thing here, that he expresses upon the same occasion in another place, viz. They (those that you do good to) cannot recompence you, but you shall be recompenced at the Resurrection of the just.

Luke 14.  
14.

Luke 16.

Again the Parable of the unjust Steward, that provided so well for himself, against a bad time, out of his Masters goods; is wholly designed to this purpose; and that the Application of it sufficiently shews, for our Saviour having said that the Lord of this Steward commended him for his providence and care of himself, he thus applies it to all his Disciples. Wherefore I say unto you, make you friends to your selves of the Mammon of unrighteousness (i. e. of these false deceitful riches) that when you fail you may be received into everlasting habitations, plainly declaring, that the best provision that rich men can make for themselves, against the time of their death, in order to their reception into the other world, must be the charitable actions they do with their wealth while they live here.

Mat. 9.

Lastly,



Lastly, In another place our Saviour saith the very same thing in effect, that is said in the Text; for this is his counsel to all that mean to be happy in the next life, viz. that they sell *that they have* (that is when the times are such that it is reasonable so to do) that they give alms; for thereby they provide to themselves bags which wax not old, a Treasure in the Heavens where no thief approacheth nor moth corrupteth. Luk 12.32

To these three Texts of our Saviour, I shall add three others of three of his Apostles which speak just to the same effect, and with them I shall conclude. The first is that of S. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews; where having spoken most severe things, and denounced no less than Hell fire against the false brethren among them, yet thus he comforts the Church to whom he writes. *But beloved* Heb. 6.9.  
 (saith he) *we are perswaded better things of you, and things that do accompany salvation, though we thus speak.*  
 And what I pray is the reason he is thus perswaded? Verily this, *For God* (saith he) *is not unrighteous,* ver. 10.  
*to forget your work and labor of love, which you have shewed to his name, in that ye have ministered to the Saints, and yet do minister.* It was purely their Charity to the brethren, that made him have these good hopes of them, that they were in a state of Salvation. Though that Church as to other things was in a very degenerate condition, yet considering they had been laborious and diligent in the exercise

ver. 11.

of Charity, and still continued so to be, God would not forget them, nay he was not so unrighteous as to forget them. And then, that which follows in the next verse, is very observable; And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence (to wit, in the practice of charity) to the full assurance of hope unto the end. If they would have their hopes of a future life assured to them, the way to do it was to persevere in their diligent attendance to works of mercy and kindness and charity.

1 John 3.  
26, &c.

The second passage is that of S. John. Hereby (saith he) perceive we the love of God towards us, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whose hath this worlds good, and seeth his brother hath need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth; and hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him, I pray mind that. By our charitable disposition and doing good to our brethren, by this we know we are true disciples of Jesus Christ, and this is that, that will assure our hearts, will give us confidence to appear before God at the last day when he comes to judge the world. And this is a point that the Apostle thinks so considerable, that he goes over with it again in the next verse, Beloved if our hearts condemn us not (i. e. condemn us not as to

to this point of love and charity) *then have we confidence towards God; and whatsoever we ask, we shall receive of him, because we do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

The last Text to this purpose that I desire may be taken notice of, is that of S. Peter, *Above all things* 1 Pet. 4. 8. *my brethren have fervent charity among your selves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.* O how comfortable are these words! there is none of us, even the best, but hath a multitude of sins to answer for; by what means now must we obtain, that these sins shall be covered? that is, shall be forgiven; for covering of sins is the forgiveness of them in the Scripture-language. Why, the Apostle hath directed us to the method, *above all things put on charity,* for it is charity that shall cover the multitude of sins. Charity is of that power with God, that it alone, is able to overcome the malignity of many of our sins and frailties, that would otherwise do us mischief. If any thing can make atonement for the carelessness and the many failings of our lives; and prevent the punishment that is due to them; it is to be very charitable, and to do much good: *Charity covers a multitude of sins in this life.* A great many temporal judgments, that would otherwise have fallen upon us for our sins are hereby prevented, and that not only private ones but publick too: And I think it no Popery to affirm that *Charity will cover a multitude of sins in the other life also.* That is, whoever is of a truly charitable disposition, and doth a great deal of good in his generation,

*ps. 33. 1.*

ration, though he may have a great many infirmities and miscarriages to answer for; yet if he be sincerely virtuous in the main, and so capable of the rewards of the other world; his other failings will be overlooked, they will be buried in his good deeds, and the man shall be rewarded notwithstanding. Or if he be a  *vicious*  person, and so must of necessity fall short of the glory that shall be revealed; yet still in proportion, the good he hath done in his life will  *cover the multitude of sins* . Though it will not be available for the making him happy, because he is not capable of being so; yet it will be for the lessening his punishment. He shall be in a much more supportable condition among the miserable, than those that have been unmerciful, or cruel or uncharitable in their lives. O therefore what remains, but that considering all these things, we should  *be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in these works of the Lord, for as much as we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. Giving all diligence to add to Faith, Virtue; and to virtue, Knowledge; and to knowledge, Temperance; and to temperance, Patience; and to patience, Godliness; and to godliness Brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, Charity. By our good works making our calling and election sure,*  ( so some Copies have the 10th ver. of 1 Pet. 1. )  *that doing these things we may never fall; but an entrance may be ministered to us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Cor. 15.  
58.

2 Pet. 1.  
5. &c.

ver. 10.

T H E E N D.

